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U.S. Independence Day, commonly referred to as the “Fourth of July,” commemorates the anniversary of the signing of the U.S. Declaration of Independence. The articles below provide a snapshot of some of the diverse ways in which Americans have celebrated the Fourth of July, and explore some of the history surrounding the Fourth.

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Making Sense of the Fourth of July

By Pauline Maier, 1997

Maier discusses the history of the Fourth of July, which celebrates the Declaration of Independence rather than the actual independence from Britain, and how the Declaration came to usurp a role that Americans normally delegated to bills of rights.

Celebrating the Fourth of July

By Marian I. Doyle, 1998

“After the American Revolution, towering bonfires were lit the night before the Fourth and bells, guns and cannons broke the morning.”

Room for Everyone

By Sherry Simpson, 2005

Simpson recounts celebrating Independence Day in Esther, Alaska, a tiny community just a few miles south of Fairbanks. What makes this spectacle especially fun, says Simpson, is the chance to see friends and neighbors acting silly.

Patriot Alley

By Edward E. Ericson, Jr., 1997

A traditional Fourth of July parade is the highlight of a neighborhood celebration that continues to attract strong interest in the 1990s. Ericson chronicles the history of the celebration, which began in 1934.

Home of the Brave

By Bo Niles, 1998

Independence Day is a good time to examine who we are and how we got here.

Independence Day in Bristol, Rhode Island

By Carol McCabe, 2002

This July, Bristol, a coastal town founded in 1680, will again celebrate the Glorious Fourth with its historic Military, Civic and Firemen's Parade. The first mention of Independence Day in Bristol dates from July 1777, when a British officer heard celebratory sounds across the waters of Narragansett Bay: "This being the first anniversary of the Declaration of Independence of the Rebel Colonies, they ushered in the morning by firing 13 cannons, one for each colony ... "

Independence Day, Apart From the Fireworks

By James D. Bloom, 2002

Each year, on July 4, Americans celebrate their freedom and independence with great fanfare. But writers and artists have often seen a deeper meaning in what is for most Americans a celebratory occasion. Like writers everywhere, they tend to probe and analyze this powerful symbolic event for nuanced reflection on the values that underlie the Fourth of July. As a result, the national holiday in classic American literature sometimes takes on an ironic or shadowed cast.

Playing with Fire

By Jack Kelly, 1997

Legion Fireworks has carried on a venerable craft tradition that has permeated pyrotechnics since it arrived in Italy from China 500 years ago. The history of fireworks and their use in celebration is presented.

Torpedo Patriotism

By Jack Kelly, 1997

Firecrackers, fountains and bottle rockets that ordinary citizens shoot off in their back yards, known in the fireworks industry as "toy" fireworks, are as equally replete with tradition and nostalgia as their larger counterparts.

ARTICLES OF HISTORICAL INTEREST

Meet the Author of the U.S. Constitution's Preamble

by Albert P. Blaustein, 2002

Best known for writing the preamble of the U.S. Constitution, Gouverneur Morris used his legendary wit, eloquence and insight to make many other contributions to liberty.

Constitution Is Most Important U.S. Export

by Albert P. Blaustein, 2004

In this essay, Albert Blaustein, who taught at Rutgers School of Law and authored a six-volume work on the U.S. Constitution, outlines how the document has been used as a model by other governments in crafting their own constitutions. Written to commemorate the bicentennial of the U.S. Constitution, the article remains a classic assessment of the attraction of America's fundamental political document to nations struggling to achieve democracy from the eighteenth into the twenty-first centuries.

Dr. Franklin's Plan

By Stephan A. Schwartz, 2001

Years before the United States became a nation, Founding Father Benjamin Franklin had a plan for the kind of country he wanted it to be.

The Iconography of Triumph and Surrender

By Robert A. Selig, 2000

From Trumbull and Blarenberghe to Hess and Kunstler, dozens of painters, engravers, and lithographers have tried their hands and skills at depicting the plains outside Yorktown as they thought they looked on the day American independence was all but achieved.

The Idea of America

By Morghan Transue, 2003

As part of the "We the People" initiative, the National Endowment for the Humanities invited high school juniors across the United States to submit essays that explore what it is that connects the United States as a nation. More than thirteen hundred essays were submitted. The winner, Morghan Transue, examines the belief of most Americans that governmental "checks and balances" safeguard American democracy.

Midnight Riders

By Charles J. Caes, 1997, 2004

Following a convoluted series of events, in the days leading up to April 15, 1775, Paul Revere and William Dawes were sent to alert Lexington and Concord that the British were coming. But it was a virtually forgotten third rider who would complete their mission.

The Origins of Flag Day, 1996

The early history of the U.S. flag and Flag Day is a matter of debate. Both President Wilson, in 1916, and President Coolidge, in 1927, issued proclamations asking for June 14 to be observed as the National Flag Day. But it wasn't until August 3, 1949, that Congress approved the national observance, and President Harry Truman signed it into law.

Our Flag Was Still There

By Edwards Park, 2000

It's the Star-Spangled Banner; the anthem it inspired plays on as a musical salute to the Stars and Stripes.

Seamstress for a Revolution

By William C. Kashatus, 2002

Kashatus details the life of Betsy Ross, a seamstress who lived in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania in the 1770s, and her prominent role in the history of the flag of the United States. There is controversy surrounding the claim of her descendants that she was the one who designed and made the first U.S. flag during the War of Independence.

Winter of Discontent

by Norman Gelb, 2003

Even as he endured the hardships of Valley Forge, George Washington faced another challenge: critics who questioned his fitness to lead.

POLITICS & INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

1. AMERICA CONFRONTS THE ASIAN CENTURY

Morton Abramowitz and Stephen Bosworth

Current History, April 2006, 6 pages

East Asia is now an international economic power. The region's global economic weight has not yet been matched by increased international political influence, collectively or individually. The United States remains an incredibly dynamic country and a central player in the region. But it is having difficulty getting used to a new East Asia where its power is still great but its sway much less. Morton Abramowitz, a senior fellow at The Century Foundation, and Stephen Bosworth, dean of the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University, believe that U.S. policy should be grounded in the region's new realities. Americans cannot allow themselves to be mesmerized by military considerations or seduced by excessive geopolitical rhetoric.

2. **STRATEGIC MYOPIA: THE CASE FOR FORWARD ENGAGEMENT**

Leon Fuerth

National Interest, Spring 2006, 6 pages

With increasingly complex and networked threats, the security of a country can no longer be preserved with military power alone. Leon Fuerth, a research professor at the Elliott School at George Washington University, believes that national security is now a function of how well a country manages all of its assets and how much foresight is invested in its future. In redesigning the national security infrastructure to cope with the new challenges of the 21st century, good governance plays an imperative role.

3. **ASIA IN TRANSITION: THE EVOLVING REGIONAL ORDER**

David Shambaugh

Current History, April 2006, 7 pages

The emerging and evolving Asian system today is a mixture of realist, liberal, and constructivist elements – with major powers vying for influence, while interdependence deepens, and behavioral norms and multilateral institutions develop. Such cross-trends may not make for conceptual clarity, but they do constitute the current reality, according to David Shambaugh, professor of Political Science and International Affairs and director of the China Policy Program at George Washington University.

4. **DEMOCRACY REALISTICALLY**

John M. Owen IV

National Interest, Spring 2006, 8 pages

Is America's national interest served by the spread of democracy? John Owen, associate professor of politics at the University of Virginia, believes it is. He points out that the promotion of democracy has a close connection to the growth of American power and influence, as the United States stands to reap "efficiency gains" from the extension of democratic capitalism around the globe. And precisely because of that, democracy promotion will often be a unilateral U.S. action.

5. **DEMOCRACY AND EQUALITY**

Robert Frost

The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, January 2006, 13 pages

If democracy is defined as the form of government dedicated to the realization of the values of self-determination, democracy bears a complex relationship to equality. Robert Frost, professor of Law at Yale Law School, examines the meaning of democracy, and discusses the logical and practical connections between the definition of democracy and various form of equality.

6. **AMERICAN COUP D'ETAT**

Andrew J. Bacevich, et al

Harper's Magazine, April 2006, 8 pages

We now live in a unipolar world, in which conquest of the United States by an outside power is nearly inconceivable. In this forum, a panel of experts discusses the state of the U.S. military – its culture, its relationship with the wider society, and the steadfastness of its loyalty to the ideals of democracy and to the United States Constitution.

7. **ARGUING THE WORLD**

Bernard-Henri Levy and Anatol Lieven

American Prospect, April 2006, 7 pages

Two leading thinkers ponder the American foreign policy challenges, from the achievements of the neoconservatives, the legacy of the Iraq War, and the effort to spread global democracy. Bernard-Henri Levy is France's most influential intellectual who is writing an essay on the future of neoconservatism. Anatol Lieven is a British journalist who now lives in the United States and is a fellow at the New America Foundation.

ECONOMICS & TRADE

8. THE IMPACT OF TERRORISM ON FINANCIAL MARKETS

E. Barry Johnston and Oana Nedelescu

Journal of Financial Crime, Vol.13, no. 1, 2006, 19 pages

The authors analyze lessons for effective policy and regulatory responses to protect financial systems in the face of terrorist attacks, using the events in New York on Sept. 11, 2001, and in Madrid on March 11, 2004, as examples. They note that well-organized crisis management responses were the key to the market's ability to continue to function in an effective way. At the international level, a coordinated effort was instrumental to bolstering the global payments system, strengthening confidence, and shoring up financial markets.

9. THE GLOBALLY INTEGRATED ENTERPRISE

Samuel J. Palmisano

Foreign Affairs, May/June 2006, 7 pages

A new corporate entity based on collaborative innovation, integrated production, and outsourcing to specialists is emerging in response to globalization and new technology. Samuel Palmisano, president and chief executive officer of IBM, believes such "globally integrated enterprises" will end up reshaping geopolitics, trade, and education.

10. THE HIDDEN KEY TO GROWTH

Martin Baily, Diana Farrell, and Jaana Remes

International Economy, Winter 2006, 8 pages

Dynamic, competitive local services can unlock a huge contribution to GDP growth and employment, say the authors. Unfortunately, they are being overlooked. Policymakers who want to leverage the economic power of local services growth need to ensure barriers to competition are removed and service companies are treated equally with manufacturing firms. The authors highlight the positive relationship between the local service sector and employment, and provide recommendations.

SOCIAL ISSUES & VALUES, EDUCATION & THE ARTS

11. THE FUTURE FOR HIGHER EDUCATION: SUNRISE OR PERFECT STORM?

James Hilton

EDUCASE Review, March/April 2006, 8 pages

In today's knowledge economy, the role of higher education is being fundamentally redefined. The author suggests that there are at least two ways to look at the future of higher education: a perfect storm born from the convergence of numerous disruptive forces, or the dawn of a new day, a sunrise rife with opportunities. How we choose to view it will determine much of the higher education landscape during the coming decade.

12. WOMEN OF INFLUENCE: A CONVERSATION WITH COKIE ROBERTS

Bruce Cole and Cokie Roberts

Humanities, January/February 2006, 10 pages

Bruce Cole, chairman of the National Endowment for the Humanities, talked recently with ABC and NPR news analyst Cokie Roberts about her recent book, *Founding Mothers*, and the importance of women in U.S. political history. Comparing the recent advances of women in politics with the role women played in the early days of the Republic, Roberts also discusses the difficulties of locating the original letters and manuscripts that formed the basis of her book.

13. SAN FRANCISCO THEN AND NOW

John Dvorak

American Heritage, April/May 2006, 7 pages

This year marks the 100th anniversary of the 1906 earthquake in San Francisco. The article describes how the city recovered from one of the greatest natural disasters to strike the U.S., and the potential earthquake threats that lie ahead.

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

14. NEW CONSUMPTION AND THE NEW ELECTRONIC MEDIA

Douglas Ahlers

The Harvard International Journal of Press/Politics, Winter 2006, 24 pages

Recently, the print and television news media have begun to question the future of their industries. This article looks at the hypothesized shift of news consumption from the traditional to the online news media. The advertising markets in both types of media are also examined. Although the author has found no major impact on the economics of the news industry due to online new media, pressures are still being felt.

15. AMONG THE AUDIENCE: A SURVEY OF NEW MEDIA

The Economist, April 22, 2006, 14 pages

The era of mass media is giving way to one of personal and participatory media, says one of the authors in this special report. That movement will profoundly change both the media industry and society as a whole. Among issues discussed are blogging, interactive journalism, Wikipedia, podcasting, and the “21st century media company.”

16. THINK AGAIN: GOOGLE

David A. Vise

Foreign Policy, May/June 2006, 5 pages

In only eight years, the darling of the Internet has rocketed to fame and fortune. With users in every corner of the world, Google is the quintessential American success story. David Vise, a Pulitzer Prize-winning reporter for the Washington Post, raises a question that has begun to irk human rights groups as well as Wall Street: Is Google really as kind, ubiquitous, and omnipotent as it seems?